

Albuquerque International Sunport

ISSUE NO. 5

on course

WINTER
2000

S O A R I N G T O N E W H E I G H T S

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NONSTOP SERVICE FROM ALBUQUERQUE INTERNATIONAL SUNPORT IS, WELL, SUPERB

AND GETTING BETTER ALL THE TIME.

"When you look at the population of our city and state, you wouldn't expect us to have this much nonstop service," says Albuquerque Aviation Director Jay Czar. "But a happy coincidence of strong tourism travel, no near-by competition and some federal regulations gives us great nonstop and direct service."

AT LAST COUNT, NONSTOPS ARE AVAILABLE TO 27 OUT-OF-STATE DESTINATIONS.

Some important regional destinations — Phoenix, Dallas-Fort Worth, Denver and Salt Lake City — are served by more than one airline.

What's more, the Sunport gains another nonstop destination in March, when Continental adds nonstop service to its East Coast hub in Newark, New Jersey — just miles from New York City. The new

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INSIDE



BIG I

THE ALBUQUERQUE SUNPORT is getting ready for the coming I-25 & I-40 changes. Page 2.



SPOTLIGHT

RECONSTRUCTING INTERSTATE I - 25

When you're in a hurry to catch a flight, the last thing you want to see is a traffic jam. It's even worse if you're in a strange town.

Unfortunately, prospects of a traffic jam will be facing most Sunport travelers for a two-year period starting this summer. That's when the reconstruction of the Big I (the intersections of Interstates 25 and 40) begins.

"Most of our passengers come from north of the Big I," says Albuquerque Aviation Director Jay Czar. "Not only does much of Albuquerque use I-25 to access the airport, but a big chunk of our traffic comes from Northern New Mexico — especially Santa Fe and Taos."

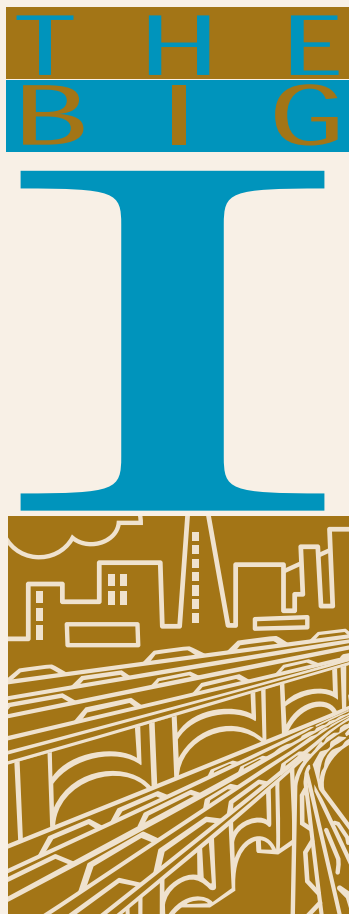
Albuquerque Mayor Jim Baca, who has advocated more mitigation from effects of the reconstruction project, notes that Big I reconstruction could have a negative effect on one of New Mexico's biggest industries — tourism.

"It won't take a lot of missed flights and long traffic jams before the reconstruction has a negative impact on tourism," the mayor says. "I hope all the efforts to reduce demand on the Big I have a positive impact, because airport travelers will be particularly vulnerable to long delays."

While a variety of procedures will be used to warn motorists about delays in the Big I, the only sure way to avoid trouble is to allow enough time to get to the Sunport, says Stephanie Bullington, Public Information Coordinator for the Big I Reconstruction.

"We are not attempting to convince people to find alternate routes," Bullington says. "Surface streets already are at capacity, and diverting traffic to them would only make matters worse."

The interstate interchange won't be closed. Two lanes of traffic in each direction will remain open throughout construction, except during nights and off-peak hours.



Reconstruction of I-25 & I-40 begins this summer... the city has been trying to rush surface street projects...alternative work schedules can help reduce traffic...bicycle commuting and bus travel will help...but remember delays may happen—so plan ahead.

Most of the time, those two lanes likely will handle traffic. Of course, accidents could slow traffic — there will be fewer lanes to absorb traffic flow in such instances. And during peak travel times (7 to 8 a.m. and 4 to 6 p.m.), there has to be a decrease in Big I usage, according to project planners.

If there is a 20 percent reduction in usage, traffic models predict, delays likely won't get out of hand. "Because 90 percent of Big I usage during peak travel times is local, the key is to reduce commuter usage," Bullington says.

"We've been working with large employers — including the Sunport — on ways of reducing peak usage by encouraging alternative work schedules, carpooling and telecommuting," she says.

"The city has been trying to rush surface street projects so we can minimize disruptions," Mayor Baca says. "We have numerous other initiatives, including encouraging bicycle commuting and increasing frequency and awareness of bus travel."

The Aviation Department will be doing its part to get the word out, with plans to distribute posters and flyers to warn tourists of potential delays. "We hope to get a lot of cooperation from rental car agencies and shuttle services in informing their customers about the potential for delays."

Her agency also will be contacting those companies and hotels to get the word out, Bullington says.

Real-time updates about Big I status will be available on the World Wide Web (www.thebigi.com). Dedicated radio frequencies also are a possibility. And news media outlets — especially radio stations — likely will provide extensive reports about the Big I's status.

AND INTERSTATE I - 40 INTERSECTION

MUST SEE



WARM WELCOME

FREQUENT FLIERS FIND COMFORT IN TWA CLUB

For more than 20 years, passengers have stopped by Albuquerque's TWA Ambassadors Club to check in, get a cup of coffee or catch up on their reading.

Lesley Schultz and Mary Kite have been a welcoming presence in the club for most of those years. They've gotten to know passengers and their families well, and have watched the Sunport grow in size and status.

Kite, who's worked for the airline for 34 years, remembers writing tickets by hand. When she became ticket-counter manager in 1972, Albuquerque was serviced by only four airlines — TWA, Continental, Texas International and Frontier. Some 1.3 million passengers crossed through the Sunport that year: less than one-fourth the current passenger total.

TWA passengers boarded planes from a satellite building, entering the cabin by stairs instead of jetways. And until the spacious Ambassadors Club opened in 1979, "the VIP room at the end of the ticket counter consisted of two chairs and a loveseat," says Kite.

Schultz began working for TWA in 1966 as a customer service agent in San Francisco. She'd left her heart in Albuquerque, though — and jumped at the chance to transfer to the Sunport's Ambassadors Club in 1983. Kite came aboard the club two years later.

While the Sunport has certainly grown in size since the early '80s, it's retained its charm, says Schultz. "I've seen spectacular, nice changes here," she says. "Every time I return from traveling, I'm astounded at the look of the airport. It's the nicest-looking, best-run airport I've encountered."

Maintenance staff are especially helpful, she says, and airport administration are supportive of the club.

With the influx of many other airlines, TWA may not enjoy the prominence it had in the mid-'80s. Still, the airline has a large contingent of loyal customers. "TWA has served Albuquerque since the mid-'30s — and we still have a presence and local personality, especially through the Ambassadors Club," says Kite.

Of the 20 or so clubs around the world, "The Albuquerque club is everyone's favorite," she says. "It has a unique Southwestern flavor."

Passengers enjoy the club's ambiance — arched doorways, tile inlays, vigas and carved furniture add to its charm. Several windows provide soft, natural light; and Mexican-influenced sculptures and prints lend an artistic touch.

Tucked back in the west end of the second floor hallway, the Ambassadors Club offers travelers a quiet spot to place a

phone call, send faxes and e-mails, watch TV or read the morning news. It's also a place to check in — Schultz and Kite confirm flight times, provide seat assignments and issue boarding passes. Coffee and danishes are complimentary, and drinks are available from the cash bar.

Regular guests have used the club as a meeting place, says Schultz. "One woman even conducts interviews here."

Many of the club's lifetime members are employees of Kirtland Air Force Base or Sandia and Los Alamos National Laboratories. "It's a unique membership — a lot of our guests are highly educated scientists who are very loyal to TWA. They'll stop by whenever they come to the Sunport."

Bill Alzheimer, a Sandia Labs engineering director, is one such lifetime member. He's visited the club countless times since joining in 1982. "I always stop in," he says. "They're good at getting me where I need to go."

The Southwest ambiance makes the Albuquerque club his favorite; but more than that, he enjoys the familiarity. "I never have to show my card here, like I do in St. Louis," says Alzheimer.

Getting to know the passengers — and their families — is the best part of working at the club, agrees Schultz. After more than 15 years, "they're like friends to us."

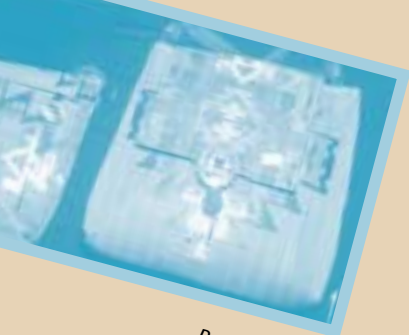
For more information on the TWA Ambassadors Club, please call 1-800-527-1468. Day passes to the Albuquerque club are available for \$25; see the TWA ticket counter for details.

TWA CLUB HAS A UNIQUE SOUTHWESTERN FLAVOR!

Passengers enjoy the club's ambiance — arched doorways, tile inlays, vigas & carved furniture add to its charm.



Lesley Schultz and Mary Kite



Page Industries' Southwestern handbags

GO

GIFTS TO

S u n p o r t S O U



RECOGNIZING

You're on your way out of town — and between boarding calls, you're searching for souvenirs.



Southwest Connection jewelry

At the Sunport, you're likely to find something distinctive, from handmade jewelry to broomstick skirts, chile ristras to colorful children's books.

Retailers range from souvenir carts on the second and third floors to three diverse book and gift shops.

"Handmade in New Mexico/Hecho en Nuevo Mexico" announces the signs in third-floor shops Puerto de Avila and Sagebrush Gifts and News. Both stores are owned by John and Kathleen Avila, who also oversee shops in Old Town and the Denver and Phoenix airports — 11 stores in all.

"The Sunport's just the best place to do business," says Kathleen Avila. "We have so much meaning regionally in terms of arts and crafts, books and fine art. Customers are very interested in all the products we carry."

Although the Avilas have operated their Old Town store, Casa de Avila, for 20 years, opening the airport stores in the early '90s provided a new set of challenges. Avila says she quickly learned to create product displays to capture the attention of harried travelers. Items that sell well in Old Town, she says, don't necessarily appeal to Sunport customers. Whenever possible, the stores play up regional events such as Indian Market.

Puerto de Avila is perhaps best known for its selection of Native American jewelry, which rivals the best of Santa Fe in its quality and craftsmanship, says operations manager Julie Lucero. Items range from \$9 earrings to elaborate, high-end necklaces.

Next door in Sagebrush is one of the city's best regional book selections. Manager Abe de Herrera stocks the store based on staff and customer suggestions. "We're all avid readers," says Lucero.

Judging from the selection alone, Sagebrush employees have good taste. What better way to spend a flight than reading up on women of the West, Native American painting, adobe homes or New Mexico wildlife? Younger travelers can choose among beautifully illustrated, multicultural books in English and Spanish.

The souvenirs are out there

If you're searching for signs of extraterrestrial life, look no further than Shop Southwest Books and Gifts, near the third-floor boarding area. The store's quirky collection includes "Alien Crossing" signs, an alien lawn ornament and even alien boxer shorts.

"I've never seen these anywhere else," says Alfreda Lucas, who's worked at the store for eight years. The store's line of Route 66 souvenirs — topped by a neon roadsign — recently won the attention of AAA Magazine, she says.

Shop Southwest is owned by George Cook, who operates an Old Town store by the same name. "Everyone likes coming here — it's one-stop shopping," says Lucas. The store's hours — 5:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. — draw quite a few business travelers.

Gifts 'a la cart'

Souvenir carts scattered throughout the terminal are ideal for last-minute shopping. Richard Payne, assistant manager of Old Santa Fe Trail gifts, operates a cart near the second-floor escalators. Items run the gamut from T-shirts to mugs, but the cart's real jewel is a sterling silver yo-yo. "I have a lot of repeat customers, from Denver, Phoenix, Dallas and L.A.," says Payne.

Page Industries owns three carts — one near the second-floor escalator, and one on either end of the third floor. Salesperson Elme Mora says her favorite item is a necklace made of overlapping silver



T-shirts at Maria's Gifts



discs. Marti Faust likes the Southwestern-style handbags. But the best-selling gift, claims Colette Tamuz, is the "Lil' Hot Stuff" T-shirt. "People buy it for babies yet to be born — and even for their dogs, since it comes in 6-month sizes."

Eye-catching broomstick skirts can be found at Southwest Connection, a cart on the third-floor west end. In the five years she's worked there, salesperson Rose Ravia says she's seen many return customers, including locals: "Our prices appeal to everyone." Kokopelli earrings and dreamcatchers are quick-selling items at Maria's Gifts on the opposite end of the third floor, says salesperson Theresa Bosel.

Superb service

There's a simple formula for judging sales success at the airport, according to Avila. "Our sales should increase at a higher rate than traffic — so we're producing more revenues per passenger." Customer service is crucial to this goal, she says. "You want customers to step out of an often rushed, busy, hectic environment, and slow down a bit," even have a conversation.

At the third-floor cart, for example, Tamuz commiserates with a weary traveler — and helps her select the perfect purse for her 82-year-old mother-in-law. The Ireland native says chatting with customers, "especially international travelers," is one of the best parts of the job.

Gift store staff are often asked to give directions — or help customers locate gates and flights. Often they go above and beyond for a customer. Puerto and Sagebrush staff were recently approached by a non-English-speaking passenger who'd been misdirected on her way to El Paso. They helped her secure a flight back to Texas, and even pitched in to buy her a meal. "We're often the last contact a customer has with Albuquerque," explains Avila. "So we take customer service very seriously."



VENDORS, FROM TOP



Continued from cover

service will begin with one flight a week, but Michael Hedrington, Continental general manager in Albuquerque, says it's likely that frequency will increase. "We're like a lot of airlines now in that we don't have enough planes to go around," he says. "Once we have more aircraft and see how this flight is accepted, we'll likely add flights to Newark on additional days."

Albuquerque Mayor Jim Baca says he is gratified to see Continental add the Newark flight. "This is great news for New Mexico air travelers," he says. "Not only does it give us a nonstop flight into the New York area with connections to the whole Eastern Seaboard, it gives us an additional connection to European destinations."

Continental serves 17 European destinations out of the Newark hub.

Continental's other service from Albuquerque is five daily flights to and from Houston Intercontinental, from which the airline serves numerous Caribbean and Latin American routes.

"We planned to offer the Newark service last April with a redeye flight," Hedrington says. "We simply didn't have the availability of planes and crews."

The lack of planes is a familiar lament among airlines. Southwest Airlines, the leader in nonstop service at the Sunport, could add more flights from here, says Terry Eisenbart, Southwest's marketing manager for this region.

For example, the airline's flights to Orlando have been incredibly popular since they were added in 1998, Eisenbart says. "We'd love to add some more service as soon as we get some more planes."

Southwest has been aggressive in adding nonstop service from Albuquerque. Just in recent months, the Sunport's largest carrier has added nonstop service to both Seattle and Tucson. Both routes are doing very well, according to Eisenbart.

The reason for Southwest's serving 18 destinations out of the Sunport is twofold. First, Southwest's routing structure is linear — the airline relies on point-to-point service rather than the hub-and-spoke arrangement favored by most carriers.

Then there's the Wright Amendment. Any carrier using Dallas Love Field — Southwest's home — is restricted to offering flights only within Texas and surrounding states. That means more Southwest flights go to Albuquerque than otherwise might be the case.

AMERICAN
HAS A NONSTOP TO
CHICAGO
AT O'HARE

DELTA HAS
NONSTOP FLIGHTS TO
SALT LAKE CITY
ATLANTA
DALLAS-FT.WORTH
& CINCINNATI

SOUTHWEST
SERVES 18
DESTINATIONS OUT OF
THE ABQ SUNPORT

NONSTOPS GET



SOUTHWEST
NONSTOP SERVICE TO
SEATTLE &
TUCSON

CONTINENTAL SERVES
17 EUROPEAN
DESTINATIONS OUT OF
THE NEWARK HUB

INTERNATIONAL
SERVICE IS A GOAL—
MEXICO
NONSTOP

"Many people want to go through here because they want our great fares for travel to our other destinations," Eisenbart says. It's worth noting that such itineraries are booked as separate flights.

"It's great for Albuquerque because many people stop here instead of flying over the city," Eisenbart adds.

Eisenbart stresses that the Wright Amendment is not the main reason for Southwest's high level of service here. "The customers keep filling up our airplanes — that's why we have so many flights," she says.

Southwest is adding another nonstop destination in January — once-a-week service to Chicago Midway Airport, convenient to the downtown area. American Airlines also offers nonstop service to Chicago, at O'Hare Airport.

"This service will be particularly good for skiers, because it will be a flight offered late Saturday afternoon," Eisenbart says. "Skiers and other visitors will get almost an extra full day in New Mexico."

Travelers also will be able to connect with numerous other Southwest flights at Chicago Midway, particularly to Southwest's New England destinations.

Another airline that is particularly important to the Sunport's array of nonstop destinations is Delta, with service to Salt Lake City, Atlanta, Dallas-Fort Worth and Cincinnati. "Besides getting people to those cities, those nonstops offer great connections to a multitude of other destinations," Czar says.

While nonstop service is strong, Czar hopes for more routes in the future.

"We would like nonstop service to the Washington, D.C., area. That would seem logical given all the federal agencies and installations in New Mexico," he says. "In addition, I'd love to see nonstop service to San Jose, California, which is the hub for Silicon Valley."

International service is a goal, too. "We've long wanted a nonstop route to Mexico," Mayor Baca says. "That has been and is a priority of my administration."

The mayor adds that continued growth in nonstop destinations from the Sunport benefits economic development in New Mexico, particularly tourism. "People don't want to spend a lot of time in connecting airports, especially with so much congestion at major airports these days.

"We really appreciate the high level of service we get from the airlines serving the Sunport."



October

1	9	9	9
Passenger total	569,468		
Southwest Airlines	268,051		
American	55,950		
Delta	55,810		
United	48,829		
America West	38,705		
TWA	33,144		
Continental	28,897		
Northwest	14,746		
Mesa	13,659		
Frontier	5,191		
Skywest	5,047		
Rio Grande Air	439		
1	9	9	8
Passenger total	551,628		

November

1	9	9	9
Passenger total	504,949		
Southwest Airlines	245,310		
Delta	47,942		
American	45,919		
United	42,388		
America West	35,953		
TWA	28,023		
Continental	26,831		
Northwest	12,225		
Mesa	10,847		
Sky West	4,790		
Frontier	4,295		
Rio Grande Air	426		
1	9	9	8
Passenger total	471,428		

December

1	9	9	9
Passenger total	493,092		
Southwest Airlines	240,117		
Delta	47,990		
American	41,668		
United	40,259		
America West	33,776		
Continental	27,460		
TWA	27,409		
Northwest	13,727		
Mesa	11,334		
Frontier	4,634		
Sky West	4,032		
Rio Grande Air	686		
1	9	9	8
Passenger total:	498,085		

TOTAL PASSENGERS

1999 6,263,804

1998 6,149,197

Percentage change over previous year 1.86%

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THE NEW SUNPORT NEWSLETTER

SUNPORT PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER: MAGGIE SANTIAGO
DESIGN AND WRITING: SIGNAL CREATIVE
PREPRESS: SIGNAL PREPRESS

